MONTEREY NEWS

January 2007
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The Town

Building Issues

At the December 4 meeting of the Select Board, Building Commissioner Don Torrico reported that a realtor had called him about a house that had just sold for less than its assessed value, sparking a discussion about the difficulties of assessments in a small town, when even in "hot" sales years, the number of actual sales is still low.

The new Art School Road Inn came up in discussion at two of the December Select Board meetings. The inn's owner called a state office to complain about charges from a plumber, who had not been paid. It was noted that the owner's online ads say that the inn accommodates up to ten guests. At the December 18 Select Board meeting, Torrico said that he and a representative of the Board of Health were denied access to the Art School Road Inn by the owners. These official town representatives explained to the owner that the inn is legally allowed to rent to up to four people, but that if the plan is to rent to up to ten guests at a time, a lodging permit from the state will be needed for the inn to continue in business.

Torrico reported that a homeowner on Lake Buel had Home Depot install a utility shed without the required permit. He noted that this is not the first time that Home Depot has done such work for Monterey residents without seeking the appropriate permits.

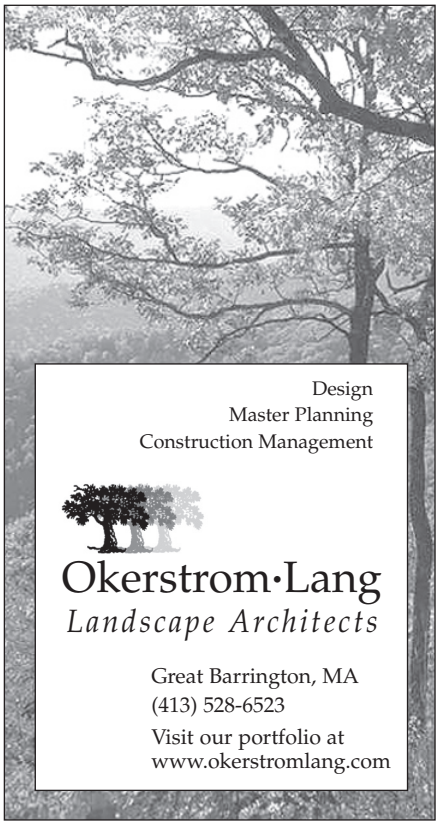
Torrico said it is very important for residents to understand that building permits are active until the final signoff of all inspectors, or when a certificate of occupancy is issued for a new house.

Maynard Forbes

New span for River Road Bridge was put into place in mid-December.

Planning Board Chair Maggie Leonard met with Torrico to talk about the form letters the Building Commissioner sends when a building permit is denied. Leonard told Torrico that there are times when the denial is not according to bylaw IV.E2b, but is instead denied under bylaw IV.E2c or IV.E2d. Select Board member Wayne Burkhart, a longtime Planning Board member, suggested that Torrico think of bylaw IV.E2 and its various components as a funnel, which continuously winnows the available options.

After attending a seminar Lee hosted for elected officials that Torrico found extremely helpful, he suggested that the Select Board, the Planning Board, and the ZBA hire engineering consultant Rob Hoogs to repeat the seminar that provides updates on recent case law about special permits and variances. Select Board Chair Michael Storch agreed to call the chairmen of the Planning Board and ZBA to initiate such a meeting.



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At the December 18 Select Board meeting, Torrico reported on myriad problems incurred in the previous week due to the real estate closing on the Pedersen property on Main Road. One of the issues is that the property contains structures that seem not to appear on survey maps provided by the 2005 flyover for the Board of Assessors.

Police Report

The 2006 hunting season has come and gone, but not without occasional excitement in Monterey. Hunters around town evoked a complaint on Cronk Road; a report of six shots in the vicinity of Gould Farm (the remains of two deer found in the gravel pit behind the Highway Garage may well have been the victims of the shots); a request to file assault and battery charges against a hunter on Mt. Hunger Road; and a notice left on a vehicle parked on Route 23 and Hupi Road asking that the car owner present a signed letter granting permission to hunt.

Other police department activities in December included: a false alarm at the Library caused by cleaning staff; an abandoned 911 call on Cronk Road due to a dialing error; a noise complaint on Tyringham Road; two calls about loose cows; and a motor vehicle accident at the corner of Tyringham and Main Roads during a snow flurry.

Police Chief Gareth Backhaus told the Select Board that from 1999 until the present, Monterey had received all of the community policing grants for which he had applied. But a change in either policy or procedure at the state level makes it likely that Monterey will not receive more such grants since the state is now inclined to make the awards to big cities.

Storch asked Backhaus for more specific information on the people who are coming in and going out of Town Hall at odd hours.

Highways and Operations

At its December 18 meeting, the Select Board asked that it be made clear to the public that although the River Road bridge belongs to the Town of Monterey, the state is paying for its repairs. When the issue of its repair first arose in 1987, the budgeted cost of $200,000 was to have been split evenly between the town and the state. By 2006, when the work actually began, the cost had risen to $1,300,000, all of which is borne by the state.

Director of Operations Maynard Forbes reported that no trees in town were downed during the storm on December 1, save one on Lowland Farm. He reported that the new tenants at Bally Gally are happy with their accommodations. And Forbes told the Select Board that he is working on a state grant to help pay for

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solar panels on the Town Garage. Although the water level at Lake Garfield was what it should be on December 11, Select Board member Jon Sylbert told Forbes that he had walked in the lake and saw beds that needed to be exposed, raising the question of how the drawdown helps weed control.

An electrical wire was knocked off of a pole onto a driveway along Hupi Road. Forbes received a bill from National Grid for the damages, but he is contesting it, saying the wire was hanging low and is the electric company's responsibility.

Forbes also reported to the Select Board about several miscellaneous items, including news of the acquisition of an excavator and its attachments; finishing the window treatment in the Select Board room in Town Hall; grading Art School Road; the necessity for removing logs across from the graveyard on Beartown Mountain Road; pouring of concrete on the River Road Bridge on December 7; and the digging of a trench for the electrical line that will be installed to light the Greene Park ball field.

Board of Assessors

Board of Assessors member Stan Ross announced that as of January 1, 2007, the FY207 tax rate will be $5.40 per $1,000 of assessed value, up from $5.29 in FY2006.

Board of Assessors member Bob Gauthier said that residents who received tax bills listing acreage that is different from what had existed before the current reassessment should call the Board of Assessors for further information. "Up to 80 percent of the parcels in town were affected by the flyover," said Gauthier. In response to questions raised by Select Board member Wayne Burkhart, Gauthier said that the differences are in calculated areas, not actual boundaries. Moreover, the differences in the calculations resulted from topographical interpretations. Concerns have been raised about the recalculations because in a few instances, a property long thought to be two acres has been found to be smaller, thereby calling into question the relationship of the parcel to the current zoning bylaws.

Typical Monterey street scene.

Lake Garfield

On December 4, Kenneth Wagner of ENSR presented a proposal for the NOI (Notice of Intent) for drawdown permits for Lake Garfield. He was accompanied by Friends of Lake Garfield members Janet Cathcart and Pat Edelstein.

The discussion about the drawdown began with Sylbert asking why drawdowns are needed. Wagner replied that drawdowns are one of many ways to keep weeds under control, and in the long run are the least expensive way to do so. Drawdowns also protect shorelines, he said, as well as shoreline structures, and lake banks. Wagner reported that drawdowns have been used successfully in the Midwest for many years. Of course, he continued, there is a downside to everything, which, in the case of drawdowns, includes an impact on shallow water. But drawdowns are useful for flood control since the water level drops in anticipation of spring inflows. Wagner pointed out that if drawdowns are used

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for flood control, environmental controls are not imposed.

The Friends of Lake Garfield would like to do 6-foot drawdowns for various reasons. Noting that the rationale for 3-foot drawdowns is to protect habitat, Wagner said that he recommends two consecutive years of 6-foot drawdowns, followed by an off year, rather than the current 3-foot, 3-foot, and then 6-foot. It is important, he said, to get the weeds under control for a few years.

The biggest issue with drawdowns is contiguous wetlands. Other problems include potential effects on wells, negative impact on some invertebrates and other species that prefer mucky substrata.

Dredging costs approximately $50,000 to $100,000 for one cubic acre, which makes it mighty expensive. "If money and permits aren't a problem," said Wagner, "then I'd recommend dredging." He noted that dredging can put years back on a lake.

Storch noted that because Lake Garfield is essential to Monterey's character, the town needs to be more active in lake protection. It was agreed that drawdowns would begin by the end of October and be completed by the end of November, at least under ideal circumstances. Conservation Committee member Chris Blair, who has more than passing familiarity with the drawdown debate, said that he had read Wagner's report and was pleased with its scientific approach.

Wagner reported that there would probably be a fish inventory associated with the next drawdown. He stressed repeatedly the importance of carefully studying the results of drawdowns on a scientific basis.

The Select Board invited Wagner to submit a contract, for which $5500 has been provided in the town budget. Wagner was asked to submit his proposal in early January for inclusion in the budgetary process. Sylbert asked why the town was paying for drawdowns for Lake Garfield, but not for Stevens Lake and Lake Buel. The response was that Stevens Lake is private, and that Lake Buel's location within three towns renders decision making quite complicated.

Board of Health

John Makuc, representing the Board of Health, gave the Select Board an update on EDS (Emergency Dispensing Site), the place where residents of Monterey, Great Barrington, and New Marlborough will go for vaccinations and drugs in the event of a catastrophe. Details are being fleshed out on the proposed plan, which currently identifies the Berkshire Hills Middle School as the emergency site. Makuc said that it is possible that Monterey would set up a satellite site for town residents.

Makuc said that the Board of Health would be submitting a mutual aid agreement for the annual Town Warrant. The Department of Homeland Security has complicated regulations about communities cooperating with each other, so the town must vote on the issue. Makuc suggests that all municipal departments enter into mutual aid agreements with surrounding towns so that if reimbursement is necessary, the legalities will be in place. He will provide the wording for the warrant.

Heron Pond

Jules Dahlman, who lives on Tyringham Road near Heron Pond, told the Select Board that the pond's water level remains quite high, which he believes sets the conditions for another flood. He is concerned that such a flood would not only cause highway damage, but create conditions for well poisoning. He asked the Select Board how the town plans to address the problem of the high water level, which, if it is indeed a health hazard, obligates the town to take action.

Burkhart warned about making the landowners responsible for any damages, stating that if we ask too much of landowners, we become a town of rich landowners, which he does not find desirable. Storch reminded the Select Board that after the historic rain last autumn, Dale Duryea reported 12 to 16 beaver families in Heron Pond, half of which should be removed. When Nancy Kalodner, owner of Heron

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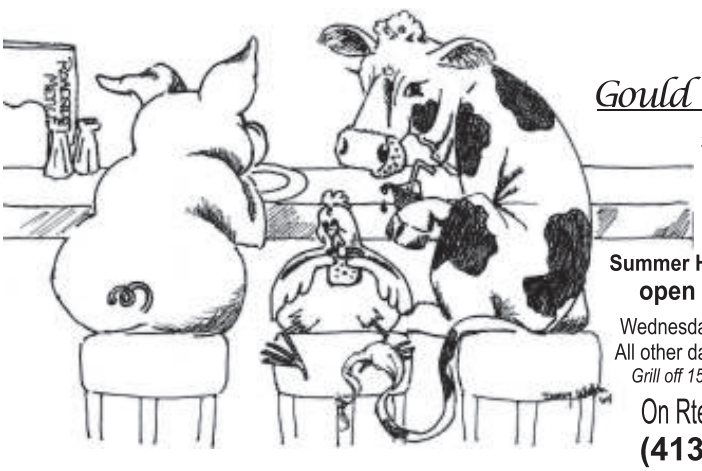
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Pond, was notified, she insisted that the person hired to remove the beavers be insured. When it was revealed that due to the high cost the trapper did not have appropriate insurance, the issue faded away.

Storch said that the Select Board believes that the repairs made to Tryingham Road after the storm are more than adequate to protect the road from overflow. He also questioned Dahlman's contention that the water in Heron Pond is contaminated, noting that if the pond is a health hazard, it's always a health hazard, not just when it floods. Before the town can or should take action, a definitive answer is needed to the question of whether the pond's water is hazardous.

Storch told Dahlman that as a concerned landowner, he should contact Kalodner, who owns Heron Pond. Dahlman asked if it were her responsibility to take care of the pond. Burkhart reiterated his oft-repeated questions about how to solve public questions dealing with private landowners, and at what level official inquiries are required.

This and That

Berkshire Mediation Services is in the process of choosing people to be interviewed in light of personnel problems at Town Hall.

The Select Board approved the renewal of the liquor license for the Monterey General Store.

Town Accountant Barbara Gauthier told the Select Board that there is $13,000 in a town conservation fund that could be used as a down payment on land if the town is in a position to buy land.

Michael Johnson told the Select Board that there had been a "quantum leap" on how UN Peace Day was celebrated and that he is already focusing on the 2007 celebration. He asked how he could become more active in town, and was told that his presence almost anywhere in town matters would be appreciated. Johnson evinced interest in helping the town prepare for such disasters as a bird flu pandemic.

Sylbert reported on the school committee meeting, telling the Select Board that there is great support for outlying schools in the district. He reminded the Select Board that the district cannot close a school without moving it somewhere else in the same town.

— Laurily K. Epstein

This town report is the final one for Laury Epstein. In her two-year tenure as town reporter she has set a high standard for excellence and detail of reporting. I will miss her keen insights and her humor, but am comforted in knowing that she has agreed to continue writing for the News *from time to time on other subjects. Thanks Laury. —Ed.*

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Monterey Democrats to Caucus

All registered Democrats in Monterey are invited to caucus on Saturday, February 3, 2007, at 10 a.m. in the meetinghouse basement. We will be electing one delegate and one alternate to attend the 2007 Massachusetts Democratic Convention.

Anyone at least eighteen-years old and registered as a Democrat as of December 30, 2006, is welcome to attend and to run for a delegate position. Candidates for delegate and alternate must be present at the caucus and consent to nomination. Those people not elected as delegate or alternate may apply to be "add-on" delegates in the following categories: youth (35 and under), minority, and disabled. Discrimination on the basis of race, sex, age, color, creed, national origin, religion, ethnic identity, sexual orientation, or economic status in the conduct of the caucus is strictly prohibited.

The convention will be held on Saturday, May 19, at UMASS Amherst. The goal will be to develop a new Action Agenda outlining grassroots party building initiatives to prepare us for the Presidential election in 2008.

A Democratic Town Committee Meeting will follow the caucus.

For additional information contact Muriel Lazzarini at 528-5796 or malazz@map.com.

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Board of Assessors News

Proposed Land Assessment Guidelines

Earlier this year we began a review of the computerized calculations that lead to the land value component of the real estate tax of each Monterey property. We were astonished to find that the computer program used 27 influence factors such as "Topology," "Wet," and "Good View" to adjust the assessed values. Often these factors were applied inconsistently or, in our opinion, used inappropriately in calculating land values. This situation most likely arose over the course of many, many years, as successive Boards of Assessors applied these factors differently than their predecessors and did so without correcting the existing adjustments to conform to their new policy. The Board has concluded that the application of these modifiers needs to be completely overhauled. What is missing from our current assessing practices are procedures that ensure consistency in the use of these factors over time and across all real estate properties. Accordingly, we have developed and propose to adopt a smaller set of modifiers (only 12), together with a set of standards to guide the decisions of when and how much modification is appropriate, and a set of rules specifying what component of land assessment (e.g., building site or excess acreage) should be modified. From time to time, we expect to adjust and "tweak" the standards so that our assessments of land values remain accurate and reflect the current market conditions.

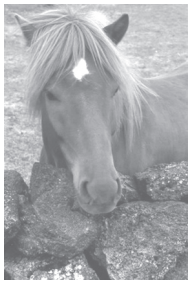
While developing this set of standards we have sought the advice and counsel of five different experts— the professional assessors of Stockbridge and Otis, a former Monterey Board of Assessor member, the Conservation Commission, and our consultant, Mayflower Properties. Now we would like to solicit your thoughts and comments on the proposed "Policies and Standards" listed below and invite all Monterey property owners to communicate in writing either by email or US Postal service to the Monterey Board of Assessors. The appropriate addresses are ralazz@map.com and Board of Assessors, P. O. Box 448, Monterey MA 01245.

Draft Policies and Standards for Land Assessment

This draft document describes our proposed guidelines for the use of land value assessment modifiers and, where possible, sets limits and gives examples that should standardize their application. The Board would like to emphasize that if this guideline is adopted and applied, it will only substantially affect the assessment of the land; the assessment of the house and other structures is calculated separately and will be affected only marginally. The proposed 12 modifiers, the codes for them, and a brief description of the proposed policies governing their use in assessing land value are offered in the following paragraphs.

Accessibility From Road (A): Currently Monterey contains a number of parcels that do not front on recorded public or private roads. Most often access to these parcels is afforded by a recorded Right of Way across an abutter's property. Some, however, have no apparent access from the road. The Access modifier should be used in cases where access is limited by the absence of road frontage, not by the topography of the terrain. In the most extreme case, parcels with no road frontage cannot be built upon unless they were recorded before the zoning bylaws were enacted; therefore they do not contain a building site, but only excess acreage. In these cases, a reduction of 25 percent in the assessment for excess acreage is appropriate. No further reductions in the assessment can be made using the Unbld modifier. Furthermore, if the owner of the parcel also owns an abutting parcel with road access, there should be no reduction because he could grant himself access. Parcels that have a building site and depend on a recorded right of way for access may have a reduction on the assessment for excess acreage that will be decided on a case-by-case basis, but not more than 10 percent.

Easement (E): Many Monterey properties have easements recorded on their deeds that allow other parties to access portions of their land or that restrict the use of portions of their property. The Board of Assessors will determine on a case-by-case basis the severity of these infringements and whether they involve



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the building site or the excess acres. The determined degree of infringement will be compensated for by a reduction in the land assessment up to 25 percent. Examples of severe impairment by easements are Map 212, Lot 4 (7 Heron Pond Park) and Map 227 Lot 44 (141 Main Rd).

Use (K): This modifier is used to enhance the land value assessment of parcels that do not front on a lake, but have access to the lake via navigable waterways like Peppermint Brook. Parcels fronting on waterways adjoining the lakes will be assessed $475. per waterfront foot if they front on portions of the waterway that are navigable with a small boat. If they front on portions that aren't navigable there will be no additional assessment. The Assessors will mark the transition points between lakes, navigable waterways, and un-navigable waterways on the new maps. As earlier, parcels that front on small steams such as the Konkapot River, Rawson Brook, upper Peppermint Brook, Harmon Brook and Swann Brook will not be assessed for those water features. (See WT FF [Lake Frontage] below.)

Restricted Use (R): The deeds to many Monterey properties carry conditions that restrict their use or development. Most frequently these are one of many types of "conservation restrictions" preventing certain types of building. Some of the restrictions are virtually irreversible, while others are reversible and the right to develop the land can be regained. The Board of Assessors will determine on a case-by-case basis the level of this adjustment and whether it should be applied to the building site, the excess acreage, or both. In those cases where the restriction to develop is irrevocable, the entire parcel will be classified as Excess Acreage (no building site) and the adjustment will be –25 percent. In keeping with previous policy, the restricted land can be put in Chapter 61, 61A, or 61B to obtain a further reduction in its assessed value.

Topographically Impaired (T): The Board noted that the previous application of the Topography modifier was particularly troublesome. Sometimes this modifier was applied against the building site assessments, sometimes against the excess acreage, and sometimes against the assessment for waterfront or excess road frontage. Furthermore, the level of assessment reduction was not always in proportion to the physical flaw. The Board proposes that this modifier be applied only when access from the road to the building site is severely impaired by the topographic features and that this modifier should only apply to the assessment of the building site. Specifically, the topographic features of other areas are excluded from consideration. Even in severe cases the reduction cannot be more than 15 percent of the building site assessment. Examples of severe topologic impairment of access are Map 228, Lot 67 (83 Main Rd), Map 227, Lot 67 (85 Main Rd), and Map 228, Lot 43 (51 Pixley Rd).

Unbuildable (U) and Wetlands (W): The Board proposes that parcels that are Unbuildable because of size, zoning or inability to meet Board of Health requirements or because they are wetlands should be treated as impaired excess acreage and not as impaired building lots. The Board proposes to set the maximum adjustment for permanently unbuildable and wetland acreage at –25 percent. The Board recognized that parcels once classified as unbuildable may eventually become buildable because of changes in Title 5 regulations, advances in subsurface septic waste disposal system design, or the availability of off-site water supplies. The Board will deal with this issue by periodically reviewing the unbuildable parcels and changing their classification when appropriate.

Since land areas meeting the DEP's definition of "wetlands" cannot be built upon, those parcels should be assessed the same as the unbuildable parcels if there is no building site elsewhere on the parcel. However parcels containing both wet areas and dry areas that can serve as a building site will be assessed by estimating the size of the wet and the dry areas and applying the appropriate classifications and modifiers to each and reporting the sum of the two as the assessed value. Since driveways and paths can be constructed in wetlands, the presence of wetlands does not reduce the accessibility of the parcel and should not lead to a modification of the road frontage or water frontage assessments.

View (V): The view modifier is applied only on the assessment of the building site, not the excess acreage. There are three levels of this modifier, V1, V2, and V3, that increase the building site assessment by a factor of 1.45, 1.9, and 2.35, respectively. This modifier can be applied to developed or undeveloped (but "buildable") land.

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Lake Frontage (WT FF): Monterey increases the assessed value of parcels having frontage on Lake Garfield by $1,900 per foot of lakefront; on Lake Buel by $1,800 per foot of lakefront; and on Stevens Pond by $1,000 per foot of lakefront. In the past, parcels fronting on waterways connecting to the lakes (the channels in Lake Garfield and Lake Buel, the entrance to Peppermint Brook) were assessed arbitrarily and often in inconsistent ways. The Assessors policy for parcels fronting on waterways adjoining the lakes is to increase the assessment by $475 per waterfront foot if they front on portions of the waterway that are navigable with a small boat. If they front on portions that aren't navigable there will be no additional assessment. The Assessors will mark the transition points between lakes, navigable waterways, and un-navigable waterways on the new maps. As earlier, parcels that front on small steams such as the Konkapot River, Rawson Brook, upper Peppermint Brook, Harmon Brook, and Swann Brook will not be assessed for those water features.

Excess Road Frontage (EX FF): Road frontage in excess of the 200 feet required for a building site may increase the value of the parcel if the amount is sufficient to allow construction of a second dwelling (300 feet) or subdivision that creates an additional building site (400 feet). Accordingly, the Board of Assessors will increase the assessed value of parcels using the Excess Road Frontage (EX FF) modifier in those cases where there is a potential for subdivision or additional dwellings. Since this potential will depend on a number of other factors (total acreage, etc.) the application of the modifier will be decided on a case-by-case basis. The adjustment will not be more than $100 per foot for frontage in excess of 299 feet if the subdivision potential exists.

Beach & Water Rights (BR): An additional $7500 is added to the assessment of properties that carry a deeded right of way or deeded right of access to a private beach or waterfront property.

Neighborhoods (NGHD): Comparable parcels of land have different fair market values depending upon their location within Monterey. In order to account for the influence of location on property assessment, the Board of Assessors, with the assistance of its consultant, Mayflower Properties, has divided Monterey into 8 assessment areas or neighborhoods, each of which carries a separate schedule for assessing building sites and excess acreage. The neighborhoods are listed in the table below together with the basic (unmodified) assessment values for the building site and excess acreage. The LG, LB, and SP include all properties within 260 feet of the mean high water line for the lakes. The business (B) neighborhood is the business district defined by the zoning bylaws. The M1, M2, and M3 neighborhoods are fragmented and scattered across Monterey. The precise neighborhood assignments can be found in the "Road Classification" document on the Board of Assessors web pages of the Monterey website. The neighborhood assignment is usually determined by the road segment on which the parcel fronts. However, when a parcel spans two neighborhoods, it is assigned to the one with the highest assessment. For example, parcels that have frontage on Main Road (M2) but extend down to Lake Garfield (LG) are assessed at the LG rate, not the M2 rate.

— Robert A. Lazzarini

Table I. Monterey Neighborhoods & Assessment Rates

NEIGHBORHOOD	*BUILDING SITE*		*EXCESS ACREAGE*
	Std. Size	*Assessment*	*Assessment per Acre*
M1	2 acres	$87,120.	$5400.
M2	2 acres	$108,900.	$6400.
M3	2 acres	$139,392.	$7800.
SP (Stevens Pond)	2 acres	$174,240.	$8500.
LB (Lake Buel)	2 acres	$214,315.	$8500.
LG (Lake Garfield)	2 acres	$214,315.	$8500.
B (Business)	0.5 acres*	$80,586.	$8500.

* Monterey zoning bylaws sets the minimum lot size for dwelling in business district at 0.5 acres and for businesses at 0.25 acres.

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Brush Burning Season Opens

Each year, the state allows some Massachusetts towns, including Monterey, to conduct open burning. It is important to remember that when burning, you are subject to certain requirements and responsibilities issued and enforced by the State Fire Marshals Office, DEP, and your local Fire Department. These guidelines include the following:

- Permits can be obtained from January 15 to April 30.
- You must obtain a permit for open burning from the Monterey Fire Department by calling **528-1734.**
- Residents must call on the day they will be burning; no permits are issued ahead of time. The permit is good for one day only.
- Burning hours start at 10 a.m. and all fires must be out by 4 p.m.
- Burning materials will be confined to brush only. **All other materials are prohibited.**
- Burning piles will be kept small and controllable
- No burning within 75 ft. of a building.
- Have a method of extinguishment and tools available.
- Never leave the fire unattended for any reason.
- Permits are issued weather permitting. Burning is not allowed every day.
- Don't wait until the end of April; you will be disappointed if you wait till the last minute.
- Burning season will not be extended.

Make sure you call for a permit at 528-1734 and leave your name, the address of where you are burning, and a phone number.

ॐ

MONTEREY ICE SKATING PARTY!

At the Ice Skating Rink
Fire House Pavillion

Sunday, January 28
Noon – 3:00 p.m.
(*Weather & ice conditions permitting. Check signs outside rink to make sure it is open.*)

Food!!! Drinks!!! Friends!!!
Fun!!! Music!!!

Non-skaters are encouraged to bring sleds to play and sled outside in the snow!

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Lincoln Lipsky Serving in Iraq

Private First Class Lincoln Lipsky, an Infantry Scout with the First Squadron, 40th Cavalry, an RSTA Unit (Reconnaissance, Surveillance, Target Acquisition), is currently serving in Iraq. His unit is part of the 4th Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, which is Airborne, and stationed in Fort Richardson, Alaska. Lipsky, a resident of Monterey, attended local schools including the Monterey Kindergarten and Berkshire Country Day School, and is a 2001 graduate of Mount Everett Regional High School. After graduation Lincoln attended Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, New York. He is the son of Jed and Annika Lipsky of Stowe, Vermont, and Maggie Leonard and John Humphrey of Monterey.

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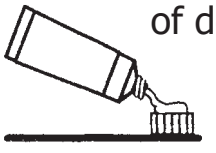


528-6520

Route 23 Monterey

Planning Board News

The Planning Board held three meetings this month to make up for the "lost" meeting of Thanksgiving (we meet on Thursdays) and also because we figured that the Christmas holidays would impact the meeting on December 28.

There was a Planning Board meeting on December 28 because otherwise I would have had to stay at my parents' house in Virginia and, as I told the rest of the board members, that can't happen. Just kidding. Please allow me to indulge in a little levity as a reward to those loyal readers of the Planning Board column which, let's face it, can be a tad dry, what with me droning on and on about land division, changes to subdivision control, and whatnot. Again I jest because, actually, the Planning Board is one of the most interesting and important aspects of town government. Talk about what's happening "on the ground"! That's what the Planning Board is all about. The actual earth under our feet that we all call home: Monterey

At our meeting on December 14 the Planning Board unanimously voted to sign a contract with the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission to enlist their help and begin the work of creating a master plan for Monterey. At the town meeting last May the Planning Board requested, and was granted, a budget of $5,000 towards creating a master plan. Melissa Jette is the senior planner at the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission assigned to work with our town. She is currently working with Pittsfield on their master plan, and she also worked with Sheffield on theirs. Melissa created a Scope of Work document that includes project coordination, master plan elements, and an implementation plan.

The board initially reviewed the contract and scope of work plan at the beginning of November and, at that time, board member Mike Erkinnen asked for there to be more specifics about deliverables. This turned out to be great advice. Ms. Jette responded with a new scope of work plan that clearly states exactly what Monterey can expect to receive from Berkshire Regional Planning in terms of meetings and support, documents, editing, and recommendations. The truth remains that, although we will get assistance from Regional Planning, we, as a town, need to make the choices and do the work ourselves.

It's all about the choices. What do we want and where do we want it? If we choose the "head in the sand" route, then development will happen anyway on a default basis. That means there is the potential for a house every two hundred feet and on every two acres of land. That's pretty dense, but you would have to be pretty dense to have your head in the sand planning-wise, so perhaps that would be a form of poetic justice. The Planning Board has a lot of information from the Community Development Plan and that is helpful, but we need more information and more citizens to be involved in the master plan process. The Planning Board will be holding a series of meetings in the next few months as we approach the time of the annual town meeting so that we may get down to the business of, well, planning. We will publicize the meetings and even make phone calls to beat the bushes for our fellow citizens. Perhaps you could make it a New Years resolution to be a part of the master plan committee. It will be a relatively short-term commitment and the payoff for the future of the town could be huge. Meetings will be fun and there will be cookies. See you there.

— Maggie Leonard, Chair
Monterey Planning Board

Monterey Potluck Suppers

At the last potluck supper on December 6th, George Emmons gave a lengthy, enlightening talk on the Knox Trail forged through the Berkshires during the Revolution. We are grateful to him, and also to Nora Hayes, who provided the holiday decorations.

The next Monterey Community Potluck Dinner will be on Wednesday, January 10, at 6 p.m. at the Monterey Meetinghouse. Local cardiologist Dr. Philip Bhark has recently spent several months in Tibet and will speak on the state of Tibetan healthcare.

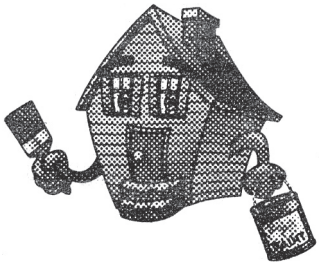
Everyone is welcome. Please bring a dish with a serving utensil to share and a plate and silverware for yourself.

— Kyle Pierce

From the Tax Collector

The actual Real Estate and Personal Property tax bills for fiscal year 2007 have been mailed. The third-quarter tax is due February 1, 2007. If you did not receive your bill, please contact the tax collector's office (413-528-1443 x117). Any questions regarding assessments or abatements should be directed to the Board of Assessors at 413-528-1443 x205. The application deadline for abatements is February 1, 2007.

— Mari Enoch



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Monterey Ice Skating Rink Opens (maybe)

The Monterey Park Commission has rented the pavilion behind the Fire House from the Monterey Fire Company for ice skating. Skating will begin as soon as it is cold enough to make ice. Check the signs outside the rink to make sure that it is open.

Many thanks to all the volunteers who helped to set it up: Kenn Bassler, who brought coffee and donuts from the General Store; and the workers, Rick Andrus, Josh Allentuck, Steve Graves, Ken Gleason, Darral, Kerry, and Matt Jassen. Brian Puntin of Roberts Woods Farm brought much needed wood shavings.

Thanks to all and happy skating!

Nonviolent Adult Ice Hockey

Nonviolent Adult Ice Hockey will begin at Monterey Ice Skating Rink as soon as weather permits ice-making and continue through January and February:

- Sundays at 9 a.m.
- Tuesdays at 7 p.m.

The program is free, and all are welcome.

TOWN OF MONTEREY

Skating Rink Hours / Winter 2007

Firehouse Pavilion

MONDAY–FRIDAY

Dawn to 3:00 p.m.	Public Skating
3:00 to 5:00 p.m.	Kids/Family Hockey Time
5:00 to 7:00 p.m.	Public Skating (may be closed for ice-making at this time; also, skaters may be asked to leave the ice)
7:00 p.m. on,	Hockey
except Wednesday	Public Skating

SATURDAY

9 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.	Kids / Family Hockey
noon to 3:00 p.m.	Public Skating
3:00 to 5:00 p.m.	Kids/Family Hockey
5:00 to 7:00 p.m.	CLOSED
7:00 to 9:00 p.m.	Saturday Night Public Skating Party

SUNDAY

9 a.m. to noon	Pickup Hockey
Noon to 3:00 p.m.	Public Skating
3:00 to 5:00 p.m.	Kids/Family Hockey
after 5 p.m.	CLOSED for major icemaking repair

Skating rink hours are dawn–9 p.m.; if finishing a game after 9 p.m., please be considerate of your neighbors and keep it quiet.

Monterey Park Commission: Leroy Thorpe, 528-2164; Jim Edelman, 528-0006; Andrew Shaw, 528-0343; Valerie Zantay, 528-8222; Chandler Crawford, 528-6611

Ice Maintenance: Darryl Jassen, 528-1495; Rick Andrus, 528-1723

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The Streets of Ephesus

As we walk
the broken marble streets of Ephesus
in shadeless memory of many-breasted Diana
and the narrow footprints of Paul himself
the sunsplashed whites of the vast city
once by the sea, now wrenched to a mountain
come up out of nowhere
mocking, accusing us —
the truth dazzles up
out of light, out of past scripture:

it is we who are the ruins
because we have forgotten them.

— A. O. Howell

hole in the hat

little Jackie rubs his wonder wide eyes
as the octopus disappears, surprise!
through the hole in the hat
through the hole in the hat
through the hole in the hat
young Alice, not content to wait or wish
for question or answer, follows the fish
down the hole just like that
down the hole just like that
down the hole just like that
arriving, she, in a world beyond doubt
of wonderlings, free, all spinning about
giddy as nine stoned cats
giddy as nine stoned cats
giddy as nine stoned cats
all on a busy street with eight street lights
one on each noble tentacle, alive,
in this charmed cataract
in this charmed cataract
in this charmed cataract
no fear, no harm, no blame, just one desire
that little Jackie and the rest conspire
to dive as diplomats
to dive as diplomats
to dive as diplomats
a fierce gentility, naked passion
and bright insight, elements to fashion
one enchanted compact
one enchanted compact
one enchanted compact

— R. Zukowski
(sung to the tune of a melodica variation
on Mozart's Concerto for Two Pianos?)

Route 89 to Tuscany

"Our freedom is but a light that
breaks through from another world."
—Nikolai Gumilev (Russian Poet)

Once, everything seemed possible
Tuscany's golden fields
lemon grass and orange peel,
grapes spilling into vats —
it felt real, somehow,
banquets in moonlight,
fear of thirst, kept at bay.

But when the Earth tilts,
only the brave hang on.

Green locusts came,
then heat
and hail.
Paradise crushed
to impossible
silence.

This is winter
after all,
signs snaking
up Route 89,
sparkling vineyards
a distant dream.

Snow flutters,
yet deep underground
a real banquet awaits
here, we never go hungry
or thirst for kindness —
grapes sowed
still roll to wine
with lemon grass
and orange peel,

Tuscany was always here,
closer than we ever thought,
just waiting for the light.

— Melissa Hamilton

The One Who Is Not at Home

The one who is not at home
the one close to the roots of existence
is receiving message
about the greatness of little things
reaching outward to others.
Some live only a short flash of time.
Others enter into connection and form a combination
which has a longer duration.
That one comes into existence.
Fulfills its dance.
Disappears.

— Elizabeth Caffrey

Geography: From Ancient Times to the GeoBee

Most people in the United States have heard of the National Spelling Bee. Many children from all over the country take part in it each year, and it has enjoyed increased popularity following the recent movie *Akeelah and the Bee*. However, the spelling bee is not the only bee. Alongside it exists the equally prestigious but lesser known National Geographic Bee.

Geography is obviously an important subject. It deals with the understanding of our world, its people, its features, and its history. Above all, I find it to be immensely engaging and fun. Its history as an art and science goes back thousands of years.

No one really knows how geography got started. People have always needed to know how to get from place to place. Maps are the most notable example of people acting on this need. However, for a long time maps focused on the normally tiny area in which the mapmaker lived. People just didn't know of places outside of their neighborhood.

Then came the Babylonians. By now trading was common and stories came pouring in about foreign lands. The focus in maps began to drift away from the mapmaker's backyard. Then the Babylonians created the first known world map. Etched on a clay tablet, it depicts the world as a flat disc with oceans surrounding it. The map is mainly comprised of Mesopotamia, the land occupied by the Kingdom of Babylon and its neighbors. Outside of this is a rough, clueless sketch of other lands. The world map was born.

Mapmaking did not advance much until the Greeks came along. Ptolemy of Alexandria had an ingenious idea. He divided the world into a grid of latitude and longitude, on which any location could be pinpointed. His map contained an accurate depiction of the Mediterranean world, but got less accurate the farther it strayed from this familiar realm. That was the map that people accepted for over a millennium.

Then came The Age of Exploration. Many early voyages were made up and down the coast of Africa. But Ptolemy's map was not disposed of. It would take more. That was the voyage of Christopher Columbus. Even when he made his legendary voyage Ptolemy was not thrown out. All that was done was to add in the new discoveries and enlarge the map. After that, Vasco da Gama made a voyage to India by sea, the first ever. This was the journey that discarded Ptolemy. When he sailed around the Cape of Good Hope in 1497, and proved that Africa could be circumnavigated, something rejected by Ptolemy as not possible, cartographers had had enough. They started making new maps of their own.

Many more wondrous discoveries and enlightening voyages continued to be made. Balboa saw the Pacific Ocean, Magellan and del Cano sailed around the world (Magellan died in the process). Lewis and Clark penetrated the American wilderness. The interior of Africa, "The Dark Continent" was charted. Captain Cook sailed the South Seas. And approximately four hundred years after da Gama, the National Geographic Society was created.

By 1989 the Society realized that geographic knowledge among the public was minimal and that it was not a regular school subject. In an effort to excite children and the public about geography and to promote learning, the National Geographic Bee was formed.

Now, in 2007, I am extraordinarily excited to be participating in the very same National Geographic Bee. The questions are challenging, so I have been studying. My homeschooling group, the Berkshire Adventure Learners will be taking part. On January 8 at 7:00 p.m., the Berkshire South Regional Community Center will be hosting this event. The public is cordially invited.

The winner of this level of the bee will be required to take a written multiple choice test that includes map-reading skills and geographic analogies. The top one hundred finishers in Massachusetts will be invited to the state bee. Out of these one hundred contestants, one will succeed. That competitor will get an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, DC, along with fifty-six other state and territory winners. These students will take part in the National Geographic finals, hosted by Alex Trebek, the host of the TV show *Jeopardy*. The winner of the finals receives a $25,000 college scholarship and a lifetime subscription to *National Geographic Magazine*. The second and third place finishers also receive scholarships.

To get an idea of the difficulty of the questions, here are five sample questions from past bees to test your knowledge.

1. The country of Ecuador is named after which imaginary line?

2. Australia and which subcontinent lie on the Indo-Australian plate?

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Sunday January l4, 6–9 pm

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and find game partners!
Refreshments will be served.

Monterey Meetinghouse
Basement

Sponsored by the Monterey
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3. Which New Hampshire location had the highest wind speed ever recorded—231mph.?

4. What treelike plant of the grass family grows abundantly in Asia, where it is used for construction, paper, and even food?

5. Over one and one half million pilgrims visit what Saudi Arabian city annually?

— Jonah Carlson

Answers: 1. The Equator; 2. India; 3. Mt. Washington; 4. Bamboo; 5. Mecca.

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Jim Edelman Recieves National Award

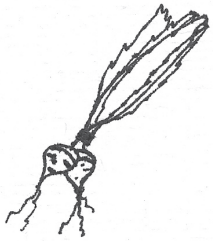
Western Massachusetts Cal Ripken State Commissioner James Edelman of Monterey was chosen as the recipient of the 2006 Babe Ruth Baseball "Lefty Gomez Volunteer of the Year Award". This award was established in 1991 to continue the great name of the late Lefty Gomez, who served as a member of the Babe Ruth League, Inc., Board of Directors for 25 years. Gomez was extremely fond of the many volunteers in Babe Ruth Baseball who put so much of their time and effort into making the total program successful. Lefty always said it was the volunteers who were the backbone in making Babe Ruth Baseball the number one amateur baseball program in the world.

Selected from over one million volunteers throughout the United States and Canada, Edelman was chosen to receive this prestigious award because of his outstanding contributions to the Babe Ruth Baseball program and the youth it represents. Under Edelman's leadership, the Western Massachusetts Cal Ripken program started with eleven players in the year 2000 and has since grown to include over 7,000 players and 26 leagues. Western Massachusetts was one of the fastest growing Cal Ripken state organizations from 2005 to 2006.

"The 'Lefty Gomez Volunteer of the Year Award' is the highest award bestowed in Babe Ruth Baseball," said Babe Ruth President/CEO Steven Tellefsen. "Its recipient must embody the spirit of the Babe Ruth League philosophy, which is to provide the best possible sports experience for every child who has the desire to play. Jim Edelman certainly exemplifies this philosophy."

Edelman resides in Monterey with his wife, Carol, and children, Annabel and Jacob. He is a Realtor/"Green" General Contractor.

Babe Ruth League, Inc. is a nonprofit, educational organization dedicated to developing better citizens by providing properly supervised baseball and softball competition for 5- through 18-year-old players. It is the basic intent of Babe Ruth League, Inc., that every candidate be given the opportunity to play in the program.



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Monterey Community Center: A Project in Progress

Since Monterey's acceptance in 1996 of Edith Wilson's bequest, the prevailing understanding around town was that her will required the town to use Edith's house for a municipal purpose in order to secure ownership of her 28-acre parcel. At a September meeting of the Monterey Preservation Land Trust, while discussing the Wilson McLaughlin land and the Community Center Project, some members reviewed Edith Wilson's will and questioned that interpretation of the document. They brought their questions to us, the Wilson McLaughlin House Committee, and we have asked a number of different lawyers (both formally and informally) to look once again at the will.

Although the exact interpretation is still unclear, this reevaluation has resulted in a new understanding that there is no default provision on the bulk of the 28.6 acres: the town assumed full ownership of at least 24 of the acres when it voted at the 1996 Town Meeting to accept the provisions of the Wilson will. This is great news for the town! At the same time we must remember that this portion of the land may be used only for "park and recreation" purposes. We have passed all this information along to the Select Board members, who will seek legal help in determining the exact status of the parcel surrounding and including the house, and what the town's options are for fulfilling the stipulations of the will

Concurrently, responding to concern over the estimated cost of the current Community Center plans, we have been exploring ways to reduce the price tag. Over the next months we will be working with the Select Board as well as architect Steve McAlister of Clark and Green as we refine the plans. We intend to prepare a plan that will provide us with a Community Center that meets our needs, satisfies the spirit of Edith's bequest, and can be built for an achievable cost.

— Susan Sellew

ॐ

Presentation on Estate Planning for Conservation at Monterey Meetinghouse

A presentation on "Your Land, Your Choices: Estate Planning for Conservation" will be given on Thursday, January 25, at 7 p.m at the Monterey Meetinghouse. The program is free and open to all (snow date Feb 1).

Are you concerned about the future of your land? Conservation is an important tool for making sure that your land remains intact and in the family. Come to this presentation with a Trustees of Reservations' land protection specialist and a land-use attorney to learn about how conservation can help you pass on your land to the next generation. For more information, contact Wendy Sweetser or Mark Wamsley at the Highland Communities Initiative: 413-268-8219.

Calling all Monterey Artisans!

At the 2007 Gould Farm Honors Gala, there will be a silent auction of birdhouses handmade by local artisans. Each birdhouse will be featured as a centerpiece on the dining tables at the Gala. Peter Murkett, one of Monterey's favorite furniture makers, has agreed to do a birdhouse, and Arthur "Birdhouse Artie" Carbone from Sandisfield will be doing three.

The Farm is looking to have 22 birdhouses in total that will showcase the representative style of each artisan. Birdhouses can be functional (for outdoor use), or decorative (for indoor display). If you are interested in participating, please contact Edie Ross at 528-4990 or photolady@mac.com.

The Gould Farm Honors Gala is celebrating its ninth year in 2007. The event is set for April 28 at Eastover Resort in Lenox. It raises funds for Gould Farm, America's oldest residential therapeutic community for adults coping with mental illness, offering emotional rehabilitation based on principles of respectful discipline, wholesome work, and unstinting kindness in a noninstitutional setting.

ॐ

MONTEREY UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Sunday Service · 10 a.m.
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Elizabeth Goodman, Pastor

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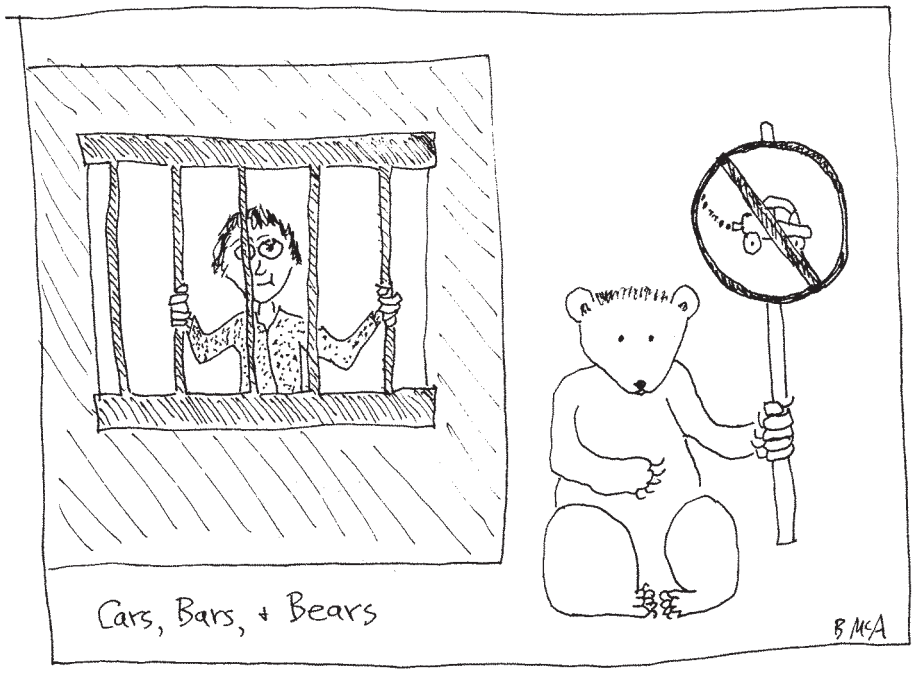
The Polar Bear Challenge

I heard it last night at a party: the polar bear has been given endangered species status ("given"??), and since habitat destruction is what has pushed the bear into this shocking category, any action taken by anyone which threatens its habitat is illegal.

This is big, my friends. We can now go to jail for driving our cars! I have waited a long time for this and the relief I feel is like the relief the drug addict must experience when someone finally says, "I see you. You see yourself. You must stop."

I don't know any more than you do about polar bears. I have seen the lovely photos, on some Xmas cards and calendars. They are appealing in a sentimental way, but they are also compelling in a moral way. How can we continue a life-style that will cause the extinction of this creature? Or any other creatures, for that matter? Including ourselves.

Biofuels and Big Wind cannot save us, or the polar bear. Only a dramatic shift away from our addiction can do this. We are addicted to something that is called the American way of life. Though we are indeed Americans, we have no right to it. It is killing the Iraqis, the polar bears, the Somalis, the spotted salamanders, the sugar maples, the invertebrates of the Lake Garfield mudflats.



Enough, my friends and neighbors. What will you give up? What do you need to live? I ask you to think about these questions and take up the challenge to change your lifestyles. You have nothing to lose but the polar bears, your lives, and the lives of your children and grandchildren.

Am I crazy? Am I lonely? Am I frightened? Yes. And I am ready. I hope to see you in jail, for the bears.

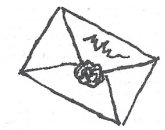
— Bonner J. McAllester

Benefit Concert for Community Radio Station

WBCR-LP and Club Helsinki present Sloan Wainwright in concert on Sunday, January 14, at 12:30 p.m., in the first acoustic brunch concert of 2007, to benefit the independent community radio station.

A forerunner in the independent music scene, Sloan Wainwright has created a body of passionate work; her rich contralto earth-mother voice, and compelling songwriting have fused to burn a new definition for women in music. She melds the best of jazz, blues, folk, and pop to create a soulful hybrid. Youngest sister of Loudon, aunt to Rufus and Martha Wainwright and Lucy Roche, she has music in her blood. She travels extensively on the folk music circuit, and has 6 CDs to her name.

Tickets to the concert are $15.00, and $8.00 for kids under 12. A great brunch is available at the Club, 284 Main Street, Great Barrington. Reservations suggested— call 413-528-3394.



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Library Notes

As librarian in Monterey I never thought I'd be writing a column on how to get a library card at another institution, but here is how and why to do it. In Monterey we already have access to Infotrac, which has access to many journal articles of general and academic interest, as well as health, literature and business journals. We can also access Newsbank, which allows us to search the *Boston Globe,* the *Springfield Republican,* and the *Berkshire Eagle*. Another service they provide is access to e-books. You can browse the collection and check out an e-book to read as long as no one else is reading it at that time. Though you might not want to read books in that manner, because the books are all stored in a database you can search the entire collection for key words and phrases. For instance, they have all of Shakespeare's works. If you can't remember in which play a certain line appears, all you have to do is use the search engine. It will bring up the page as though you had the book in front of you.

The e-book collection also has about 300 books from the Dummies series—so if you're stuck on some software problem you can check it out on Windows or Excel for Dummies. There are also podcasts available through this service provided by the Western Massachusetts Regional Library System. You don't even have to come in to the library to do it—our remote access card number is 20571000001001 and needs to be typed in when you go to the wmrls.org homepage and click on remote access.

Someone recently came to the library and asked if we had access to JSTOR—a highly regarded academic database of journal articles. Monterey doesn't have access, nor does our region, but the Boston Public Library does. The Massachusetts Library Commissioners are funding a program that allows the Boston Public library to give out eCards so that a patron can access even more services electronically. It also has access to the New York Times, and many other databases. That's the why. I have heard from more than one person that they googled something and were completely overwhelmed with information, and had a hard time separating fact from fiction or opinion. These reputable databases are one way of sorting out the information that you are looking for.

The how is very simple. Go to the BPL.org site. Click on Borrowing and circulating information. Click on What is an eCard? You must be 13 years old. It takes a very short time—even on dial-up. Your eCard is good for 6 months. The Library Commissioners are looking to see how this program is used to determine what databases they will provide access to in the future. The next step you might want to take is to go to the Boston Public Library with your eCard number and identification within the 6 months and they will give you a permanent BPL library card. There is no cost involved except getting to Boston. We send our tax dollars to Boston and often we never get to the city to see what we paid for—but now the powers that be are giving us a chance to access electronically what those dollars pay for. If enough of us sign up and use these services, hopefully the Commissioners will continue the program.

— Mark Makuc, Library Director

The Historic Sledding of January 1776

When the twenty-six-year-old Henry Knox, recently assigned as General George Washington's artillery commander, came through this part of the country with eighty teams of oxen pulling forty-two sleds loaded with more than sixty tons of ordnance, several feet of snow had fallen across the Berkshire Mountains. Weather had been a major factor from the very beginning of his three-hundred-mile journey from Fort Ticonderoga to Boston. The first leg of his gauntlet lay across thirty miles of Lake George, where high winds swamped his largest barge, followed by thin ice over the Hudson River, causing a near sinking of a sled carrying a five-thousand-pound cannon. Both were shallow sinkings and the cannons were retrieved before he reached Albany.

If Knox had been dreaming of a white Christmas, he got his wish a little later, before what was to be called "A Royal Train Of Artillery" started down the east side of the Hudson toward Claverack and Kinderhook, then turning east. He must have known that there were very few good roads to take him along his next-route through Alford, Great Barrington, Monterey, Otis, Blandford, Westfield, and then on to Springfield. His best chance to get

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through was to use powerful teams of oxen, steady and surefooted, to drag his precious cargo on sleds through the snow. For the largest loads, several teams, sometimes three or more, were hitched one behind the other. Top speed was about two miles per hour.

Each team was yoked together by an oxbow so that the force of the draft was distributed across their shoulders. However, when they started down the steep slope on the other side of Mt. Glasgow in Blandford, sleds started to run away, because yoked oxen could not slow a sled like a harnessed horses. Teamsters refused to go on until proper precautions were taken. When they reached Springfield, the worst terrain was behind them and the roads were better. Ox teams from New York were relieved and sent home, replaced with a faster train with more horses. None too soon the badly needed cannons reached Dorchester Heights, and to celebrate a patriotic spring they were trained upon the British Fleet in Boston Harbor. The British general elected to withdraw, seeing that Washington now had the upper hand in what had been a stalemate for control of the city, so also losing all of New England by his departure.

Knox was promoted to colonel for his role in bringing about a major turning point in the War of Independence. He then organized a force of artillery that could be moved wherever the army went to fight, with as many as four hundred teams available for the task. With the artillery, battles were won at Monmouth, Princeton, Trenton, and finally at Yorktown, Virginia, where the British surrendered. After the smoke of the Revolution had cleared and George Washington became President, Henry Knox was appointed our nation' s first Secretary of War.

When Henry Knox rode through Monterey in mid-January 1776, he was destined to be recognized as a giant among his compatriots. Not only did he weigh more than three hundred pounds, but his ability to move mountains compares to Hannibal crossing the Alps to attack the Roman Legions, as well as to the Allies invasion across the English Channel to liberate Europe. Each venture depended on an assessment of topography and climate. In Knox's case, the mountain was a column of cannons, capable of turning the tide of battle and tipping the balance toward independence. To borrow from the poetry of Ralph Waldo Emerson, he was one of those whose shots would be heard round the world.

— George B. Emmons

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Small Town Reflections

Last Christmas, I wrote my first monthly column for the *Monterey News*. I can hardly believe a year has gone by. The feedback and comments I've received are wonderful and encouraging, and I am truly grateful for them. A few days ago I went to the concert in the middle of Monterey. It was a wonderful evening of entertainment with the familiar faces of our talented local musicians. The last singer, Bobby Sweet, performed three songs that provide the framework for my musings this month.

The first one was about things that don't change in a small town, the second about family and being all together in the same boat, and the third was about how dreams keep us alive. I am not doing justice to the songs of course, which cover a great deal more on these topics, I am simply summarizing. These themes within Mr. Sweet's songs were shockingly poignant for me, and as I listened, I observed and remembered.

There are many things in Monterey that were staples of my childhood. There is the river running through town where I used to take nature walks, the town beach where I played every summer as a child, the General Store where I ate (and continue to eat) countless lunches while catching up with old friends. These and many other familiar sights remain a source of comfort when I return home from school. As I listened to the music that evening, I found myself observing others in the audience; family members, friends, people I recognized from the store, and others I didn't know at all. I watched a young boy in front of me watching the music while curled up next to his father, and a woman snap pictures in delight. I heard the voices bellowing "This land is your land," and I felt in a way that we were really a family. Those who were from out of town were welcomed into our community event with open arms that night, and I realized that for me Monterey is a family. I grew up here and I come home to my family and my town.

As I move on in my college experience and begin to look at schools for my junior year abroad and think a little more seriously about writing a thesis and going to graduate school, I know that it is true, dreams do keep us alive. There should always be something one notch higher than where we are, but as I strive for those rungs above me on the ladder, it's nice to feel the ones below will not give out. My time at home in Monterey provides a constant sense of security which anyone can probably relate to with his or her own hometown; it comes from memories, evidence of familiar things that remain unchanged and the feeling there is always a greater family to which you belong.

Shortly before the concert, while I was working at the store, I learned that Sammy Brown, a coworker, performer, and friend was in an accident right in Monterey. Thankfully he survived and is recovering. As we absorbed the news I personally felt deeply the impact it had on the store and the music community. Later that evening while watching the concert, I let the music take my mind on a little journey of personal reflection and thanks for the blessings of family, friends and township.

— Tarsi Dunlop

Dual Homeowners Corner

Happy New Year to everyone.

As the snow begins to fall, the landscape changes, the roads become more of a challenge to navigate, and thoughts of Monterey remain in our heads and our hearts.

When our family gathered to celebrate Thanksgiving Day we made plans for our next visit. Of course skiing at Butternut Basin was on the list, as welt as connecting with old friends. Schedules varied, but the focus was the same. Our house in Monterey is the place where we all want to be. We are looking forward to sharing new experiences and recalling old ones. The grandchildren love to hear about the old ones.

I hope that we all have a peaceful, healthy year and look forward to reconnecting with our wonderful friends next year and sharing this special place. Tell me what you think.

— Barbara Haver

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Late fall and winter is a great time to have your tree work done, modify or create the hardescapes on your propeerty, and create landscape plans for the spring.

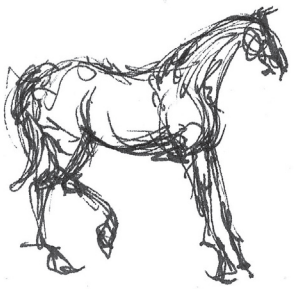
Monterey Library Recent Acquisitions

DVDs
DaVinci Code
The Devil Wears Prada
Cars
Chronicles of Narnia
Invincible
Robin Hood
World Trade Center
Air Buddies
The Parrots of Telegraph Hill

Adult Fiction
Boleyn Inheritance, Phillipa Gregory
Rising Tide, Jeff Shaara
Against the Day, Thomas Pynchon
The Echo Maker, Richard Powers
Nature Girl, Carl Hiaasen
Ruby in Her Navel, Barry Unsworth
Santa Cruise, Mary Higgins Clark
Next, Michael Crichton
Treasure of Khan, Clive Cussler

Adult Nonfiction
Aldo Leopold's Odyssey,
Juliann Newton
The Digital Photography Book,
Scott Kelby
On the Wealth of Nations,
P. J. O'Rourke
The Real Animal House, Chris Miller

Children's
Weather Projects for Young Scientists,
Mary Carson
Extreme Animals, Nicholas Davies
Flotsam, David Wiesner
Violet Comes to Stay, Jan Karon
Sea Horse: The Shyest Fish in the Sea,
Chris Butterworth
I'm Dirty, Kate and Jim McMullan
Frog Heaven: Ecology of a Vernal Pool,
Doug Wechsler



Reflections of a Retiring Town Reporter

Select Board meetings, held on Monday mornings from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. (more or less) begin with reports from the Director of Operations, the Building Commissioner, and the Police Chief. The three men give the Select Board written reports or forms, which are often followed by verbal reports that provide the "official" substance of the monthly town report. Following appearances by the three department heads, members of the public, representatives of town boards and commissions, and anyone else who wishes to do so, meet with the Select Board.

I have attended Select Board meetings for two years, during which time I have come to understand, appreciate, and feel grateful for the enormous amount of time and effort that many Monterey residents contribute to our town. By serving on boards and commissions, a goodly number of Monterey folks fulfill Alexis de Tocqueville's early nineteenth century observation that American democracy flourishes because of the strength of its volunteer organizations.

Time spent at Select Board meetings has taught me a great deal about the interstices of public life in Monterey. I've greatly enjoyed seeing how government works on the most local level. Even when I disagree with opinions held or decisions made by various local boards and commissions, I have come to respect the time and energy that so many of our residents give freely and willingly to shape and shepherd the destiny of our beautiful, quirky, and mostly peaceful community. The Select Board, Planning Board, Board of Health, ZBA, Conservation Commission, Library Board, Friends of the Wilson McLaughlin House, Finance Committee, Board of Assessors, Park Commission, Solid Waste Committee, Friends of Lake Garfield, Education Committee, *Monterey News* Board, and any other board or commission I have mistakenly overlooked are what magically transform our town into a community.

I want to thank Will Marsh and the board of the *Monterey News* for the opportunity to learn so much about town government, and to be able to share my discoveries with interested readers. Maggie Leonard, who personifies the word "panache," has agreed to return to reporting on the Select Board, which is great news for everyone. Maggie's years of participation in Monterey activities, coupled with her unique outlook and boundless energy, make her ideally suited to inform us.

— Laury Epstein

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Gould Farm's Rita Kasky Retiring

Rita Kasky, development director at Gould Farm since 1996, will retire on December 29, 2006. Kasky, who moved from New York City to the Berkshires in 1992, organized the Farm's first fulltime development operation, raising close to $5,000,000 in operating and capital funds to support the Farm's treatment program for people with mental illness. Founded in 1913, Gould Farm is the oldest continuously operated therapeutic program of its kind in the country.

During Kasky's tenure the Farm raised funds to build the Harvest Barn, a 4,000 square foot three-story barn that houses a commercial kitchen for processing products grown at the Farm. The Harvest Barn serves as a teaching facility for guests (the Farm's clients) as they develop cooking and baking skills and learn how to market, package, and ship products for retail sale. During the same time period oth the dairy barn and the Retreat House were modernized.

Gould Farm's revenue comes from a combination of sources. The primary source is fee for service, followed by contributions and the sale of Gould Farm products. The Farm waives an average of more than $1,000,000 in fees each year for families whose financial resources are limited, making fund raising a major undertaking.

Madeleine Tramm of New York City and Mt. Washington, Massachusetts, will replace Kasky. Tramm has served as Vice President of Hazelden New York, innovators in chemical dependency treatment, research, and publications, where she led fundraising and marketing efforts. She most recently held the position of Director of Business Development for the Caron Foundation, a leader in addiction treatment.

"I am very pleased to be turning over the development and marketing responsibilities for Gould Farm to Madeleine. She will be a wonderful addition to the Farm and is gearing up for the major challenges ahead. I plan to maintain a connection to the Farm—it's the kind of place that stays in your heart and commands your attention," says Kasky.

For further information about Gould Farm, go to www.gouldfarm.org or call 413-528-1804.

Sheffield Concert January 13

Neighborgoods will present the Joint Chiefs in concert at the Old Parish Church in Sheffield on January 13 at 7 p.m. The Joint Chiefs are a folksy group playing original and cover tunes from the Beatles to Spanish love songs. Great harmony, accordion, mandolin, guitar, foot box—just come and listen. $10 at the store, $12 at the door; kids 12 and under $5.

A preview can be heard on Sunday, January 7, at the Old Parish 10 a.m. service, where George will be singing a special request.

Don't miss this local Connecticut band. Have a good time while helping close the gap on the Capital Campaign. Tickets and CDs are available at Neighborgoods, 105 Main St., Sheffield. Call 229-5941 for store hours or more information.

Upon my Word!

Every day I walk up Hupi Road to Griswold and stop where they meet. I turn at *trivia* and walk home again, knowing that this was the Latin origin of what we call trivial or unimportant. In Roman times, people meeting where three roads met would stop or dismount and exchange local gossip, lacking the Internet! *Tri via* means three roads.

—A.O. Howell

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Calendar

Every Monday (exc. holidays): Select Board meeting, 8:30 a.m., Town Hall Meeting Room.

Wednesday, January 3: Full moon.

Wednesday, January 10: Community Potluck Dinner, 6 p.m., Meetinghouse basement. Dr Philip Bhark will speak on his recent trip to Tibet. See p. 10.

Thursday, January 11: Free blood pressure clinic, 2–3 p.m., Town Offices, administered by Visiting Nurses Assoc.

Sunday, January 14: Community Game Night, Monterey Meetinghouse basement, 6–9 p.m. Sponsored by Monterey Park Commission. See p. 15.

Monday, January 15.
Martin Luther King Day. Town Hall, Library closed.
Burn Season opens. Call Monterey Fire Department, 528-1734 for permit. See p. 9.

Tuesday, January 16: Free health screening, 10 a.m., Town Hall Meeting Room.

Thursday, January 25: Presentation on Estate Planning for Conservation, Monterey Meetinghouse, 7 p.m. Free. See p. 16.

Saturday, January 27: Square and contra dancing, 8:30–11:30 p.m., Sheffield Grange, Rt. 7, Sheffield. Music by Mountain Laurel. Caller Peter Stix. All dances are taught; beginners and children are welcome. Adults $6, children $3. Information 528-9385.

Sunday, January 28: Community Ice Skating Party, noon–3 p.m., Firehouse Pavilion. Sponsored by Monterey Park Commission. See p. 9.

Saturday, February 3: Monterey Democratic Caucus, 10 a.m., Meetinghouse basement. See p. 5.

The Observer
November 26–December 25

High temp. (12/2)..... 64°
Low temp. (12/8) .....6°
Avg. high temp.....43.8°
Avg. low temp.....27.4°
Avg. temp. .....35.6°
Total precipitation
(rain and melted snow) ..... 1.8 in.
Snowfall ..... 2.6 in.
Precipitation occurred on 13 days.

Contributors

We thank the following folks for their recent contributions. Readers like you make it possible for us to continue publishing. We know you receive requests from many worthy organizations for financial help and are grateful that you include the *Monterey News* in your giving.

Maurice Stiefel
Ken & Laurel Kahn
Jane Burke
John J. Callahan

Don't Forget Your Camera

Celebrate the New Year by taking Monterey pictures for the photo contest scheduled by the Cultural Council for Memorial Day weekend 2007. We hope for photos from all the seasons. Watch the *Monterey News* for details.

David's Tipi
by Eileen Lawlor

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Contributions from local artists this month:
Rachel Arnow, p. 13; Maureen Banner, pp. 21, 22, 23;
George Emmons, p. 19; Bonner McAllester, p. 17;
Glynis Oliver, p. 11.

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